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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)/USSR

DATE DISTR. 3 May 1951

SUBJECT German Freight Cars to be
Returned by Soviet Union

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1. On 15 February 1951, it was learned that 20,000 freight cars were to be returned to the Soviet Zone State Railways by the USSR. The cars, which are of German origin, were confiscated by the Soviets in 1945. * The cars are to be turned over in Brest-Litovsk at an undetermined date. German railroad authorities expect that this will happen in June and July 1951. Details on the types of the cars to be returned are not available, since the Soviets only mentioned the figure of 20,000 cars without further specifications. The railroad repair shops have been ordered to make available a total of 40,000 standard-gauge car axles to be sent to Brest-Litovsk where they are to be mounted on the cars to be returned. These axles will presumably be collected in Berlin to be transferred from there to Brest-Litovsk. ** Director General Kramer stated that he, on the occasion of his stay in Moscow in December 1950, had convinced the Soviets that the critical situation of the German railways with regard to rolling stock necessitated the return of the 20,000 confiscated cars.
2. On 22 February 1951 about 1,000 standard-gauge railroad car axles with protective jackets around the bearings were stored at the Berlin-Lichtenberg railroad station. It is expected that still more axles will arrive. The purpose of the axles is unknown. **
3. On 6 March 1951 approximately 1,500 reconditioned standard-gauge railroad car axles were stored at the Lichtenberg railroad station. The stocks of car axles are to be increased to 3,000 units. The axles are expected to be removed before the beginning of the World Youth Rally in August 1951.

* [REDACTED] Comment. Such a measure appears possible because the number of railroad cars seized by the Soviets from 1945 to 1947 is probably much higher than 20,000. It must also be borne in mind that these German cars, because of their smaller measurements, are uneconomical for operation on broad-gauge tracks, so that the Soviets might be inclined to exchange them for new Soviet-gauge cars manufactured in the Soviet Zone of Germany. Furthermore, railroad cars are such a critical item in the

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Soviet Zone of Germany that early assistance or relief of the situation is required.

** [] Comment. These axles indicate that Lichtenberg possibly is the collection point for the axles to be transferred to Brest-Litovsk.

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